

# 1.0 Introduction

This Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) is a “first tier” evaluation of the environmental effects associated with the adoption and implementation of the Riverside General Plan, Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan, Zoning Code, Subdivision Code, Citywide Design Guidelines, and Sign Design Guidelines (Project) by the City of Riverside. The City's intention is to adopt these documents simultaneously, with the exception of the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan. The City published drafts of these documents in November 2004; the Magnolia Avenue Specific Plan will be reviewed at subsequent public hearings, following the other four documents.

The adoption and implementation of a General Plan constitutes a project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines.

## Legal Requirements

This Program EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.) and the *Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act* (CEQA Guidelines) published by the Public Resources Agency of the State of California (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.), and in accordance with the City of Riverside's CEQA Guidelines.

The report was prepared by professional environmental consultants under contract to the City of Riverside. The City of Riverside is the lead agency for the preparation of this EIR as defined by CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21067 as amended), and the content of the document reflects the independent judgment of the City.

## Purposes of the Program EIR

This Program EIR is intended to provide information to public agencies, the general public and decision makers regarding potential environmental impacts related to adoption and implementation of the proposed General Plan. The purpose of an EIR, under the provisions of CEQA, is “to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided.” (Public Resources Code Section 21002.1[a])

According to CEQA Guidelines (Section 15168), a Program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project, are related geographically, and as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions in connection with issuance of rules, regulations or plans. The Program EIR allows for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on separate individual actions, and ensures consideration of cumulative impacts that might be slighted on a case-by-case basis.

This Program EIR provides a first tier analysis of the environmental effects of the Riverside General Plan. Section 15152 of the CEQA Guidelines indicates that tiering is appropriate when the sequence of analysis is from an EIR prepared for a general plan, policy or program to an EIR or negative declaration for another plan, policy or program of lesser scope, or to a site specific EIR or negative declaration. Subsequent activities in accordance with the Project examined in light of this Program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared. If a subsequent project or later activity would have effects that were not examined in this Program EIR, or not examined at an appropriate level of detail to be used for the later activity, an initial study would need to be prepared, leading to a negative declaration or an EIR. If the City finds that pursuant to Section 15152 of the CEQA Guidelines, no new effects could occur or new mitigation measures would be required on a subsequent project, the City can approve the activity as being within the scope of the Project covered by this Program EIR, and no new environmental documentation would be required. In addition, the standards relating to subsequent EIRs at CEQA Guidelines Section 15162-15164 and Public Resources Code Section 21166 are applicable to this Program EIR.

This EIR serves as an information document for use by public agencies, the general public and decision makers. This EIR is not a City of Riverside policy document; it does, however, discuss the impacts of development pursuant to the proposed General Plan and related components, and analyzes Project alternatives. This Program EIR will be used by the Riverside City Council in assessing impacts of the proposed Project prior to adoption of the General Plan.

## Background

To define the scope of the investigation of the Program EIR, the City of Riverside distributed a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on February 23, 2004, to city, county and State agencies; other public agencies; and interested private organizations and individuals, in accordance with the requirements of the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15082(a), 15103, and 15375.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the NOP was to identify agency and public concerns regarding potential impacts of the proposed Project. Comment letters were received from the following (listed in the order received):

- Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority
- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- Southern California Association of Governments
- Riverside County Waste Management District
- Riverside Transit Authority
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- City of Corona – Planning
- California Department of Conservation’s Division of Land Resource Protection

In addition to these letters, City Planning staff received oral comments at a September 2004 scoping meeting. Written comments received during the 30-day public review period for the NOP are included in **Appendix A** of this EIR. Technical documents

---

<sup>1</sup> No Initial Study was completed for the Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15063 (a) permits a lead agency to omit an initial study if it determines that an EIR is clearly required.

prepared for the project are also included in **Appendices B** through **G**. These documents were used as reference material in the analysis of environmental impacts.

## Availability of Draft EIR and Supporting Documents

This Draft Program EIR as well as the other supporting documents discussed herein are available for public inspection at the Planning Department, Riverside City Hall, 3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA. Documents may be reviewed during regular business hours. All documents will also be available on the City's website: [www.riversideca.gov](http://www.riversideca.gov).

## Comments Requested

Comments of all agencies and individuals are invited regarding the information contained in the Draft Program EIR. Where possible, those responding should endeavor to provide the information they feel is lacking in the Draft Program EIR, or should indicate where the information may be found. All comments on the Draft Program EIR should be sent to the following City of Riverside contact:

Craig Aaron  
Principal Planner  
Planning Department  
City of Riverside  
3900 Main Street  
Riverside, CA 92522  
[caaron@riversideca.gov](mailto:caaron@riversideca.gov)

Following a 45-day period of circulation and review of the Draft Program EIR, all comments and the City's responses to the comments will be incorporated into a Final Program EIR prior to certification of the document by the City of Riverside.

## Structure of this EIR

This EIR is organized into eight sections. **Section 1.0** is this Introduction. The Executive Summary, provided in **Section 2.0**, includes a brief project description and summarizes project objectives, impacts and mitigation measures. **Section 3.0** provides a detailed description of the proposed Project. The general environmental setting is provided in **Section 4.0**. **Section 5.0** analyzes Project impacts and identifies mitigation measures designed to reduce significant impacts. **Section 6.0** provides an analysis of alternatives to the proposed Project. An analysis of cumulative impacts, growth inducing impacts, significant irreversible environmental impacts and areas of no significant impact is provided in **Section 7.0**. **Section 8.0** contains reference information.

The Appendices consist of the Notice of Preparation, Responses to the Notice of Preparation, a listing of parcels affected by renaming of zones, and technical documents supporting the EIR. In compliance with Public Resources Section 21081.6, a mitigation monitoring and reporting program will be prepared as a separately bound document that will be adopted in conjunction with certification of the Final EIR and project approval.

## **Intended Uses of the Program EIR**

The Program EIR serves as the basis for environmental review and impact mitigation for adoption and implementation of the General Plan update and supporting documents. The City will review subsequent projects for consistency with the Program EIR and prepare appropriate environmental documentation pursuant to CEQA provisions for Program EIRs and subsequent projects. Subsequent projects under the Program EIR may include the following implementation activities:

- Rezoning of properties
- Approval of Specific Plans
- Approval of development plans, including tentative maps, variances, conditional use permits, and other land use permits
- Approval of development agreements
- Approval of facility and service master plans and financing plans
- Approval and funding of public improvement projects
- Approval of resource management plans
- Issuance of municipal bonds
- Issuance of permits and other approvals necessary for implementation of the General Plan
- Acquisition of property by purchase or eminent domain

The following lead, responsible, and trustee agencies may use this Program EIR in the adoption of the General Plan and approval of subsequent implementation activities. These agencies may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- City of Riverside
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Conservation
- California Department of Housing and Community Development
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- State Lands Commission
- California Water Resources Control Board
- Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
- South Coast Air Quality Management District
- County of Riverside
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Riverside Unified School District
- Alvord Unified School District
- Riverside Public Utilities
- Riverside Highland Water Company

- Eastern Municipal Water District
- Western Municipal Water District